

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

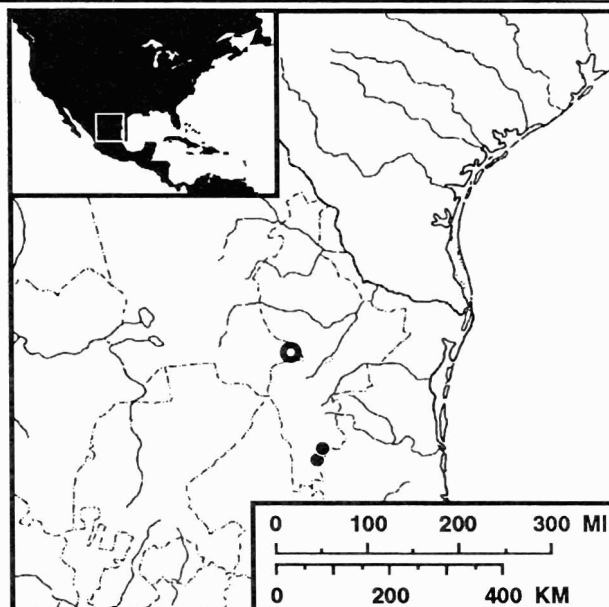
Liner, E. 1992. *Thamnophis exsul*.

***Thamnophis exsul* Rossman**
Montane Garter Snake,
Culebra de Agua Nomada de Montaña

Thamnophis exsul Rossman, 1969:1. Type-locality, "from relatively dry pine forest (ca. 9,100 feet) 11 mi E, 3.5 mi S San Antonio de las Alazanas, Coahuila." Holotype, National Museum of Natural History (USNM) 166423, an adult female collected 6 July 1961 by M.D. Sabath and R.W. Axtell (examined by author).

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition and Diagnosis.** *Thamnophis exsul* is the smallest known species in the genus, having a maximum recorded length of 360 mm; 17 dorsal scale rows in 90% of known specimens, usually (80%) with no posterior reduction to 15 rows; 7 supralabials (90%) on at least one side; 8 infralabials (90%) on at least one side; females with 142-150 ventrals (\bar{x} = 145), males with 152-156 (\bar{x} = 154); females with 52-56 subcaudals (\bar{x} = 53), males with 63-65 (\bar{x} = 64); tail



Map. The range of *Thamnophis exsul*. The large open circle marks the type-locality, solid circles indicate the other known records.



Figure 1. Juvenile *Thamnophis exsul* from 19.6 km NE San Antonio de Peña Nevada, Nuevo León, México. Photograph by author.

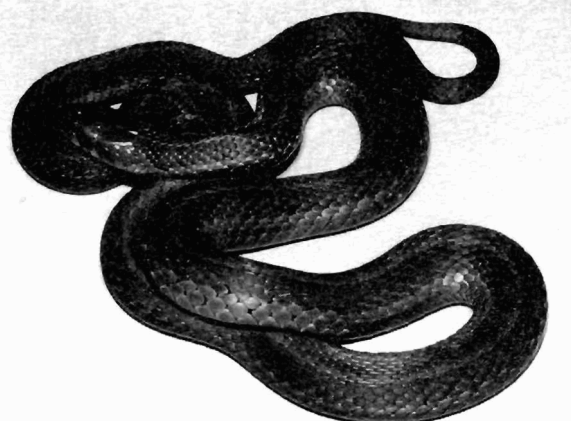


Figure 2. Subadult *Thamnophis exsul* from 19.6 km NE San Antonio de Peña Nevada, Nuevo León, México. Photograph by author.

length 18.9-20.0% (\bar{x} = 19.4) of TL in females, 21.8-22.2% (\bar{x} = 22.0) in males; 19-21 (\bar{x} = 20.3) maxillary teeth, the last 2 or 3 slightly enlarged; dorsum almost uniform putty brown with 3 indistinct light stripes, or having 3 or 4 alternating rows of spots or blotches with the light stripes partially or completely suppressed.

Specimens from Nuevo León show a marked ontogenetic pattern variation. Juveniles are prominently spotted in 3 or 4 rows. A vertebral stripe is absent or faint and sometimes interrupted at intervals by the dorsal spotting. The nuchal blotch may be divided by the faint vertebral stripe, color may be continuous with the dark dorsal head coloration or separated by a very thin lighter zone immediately posterior to the parietals. The subadult spotted condition is not as prominent as in juveniles and is barely evident, if at all, in larger adults.

The single everted hemipenis available is single with the distal half greatly expanded. The sulcus spermaticus is simple, terminating apically between raised lips. The apical surface of the expanded portion is nude, the remainder spinose; spines are very small distally, larger proximally. An enlarged basal hook is slightly distant from the other spines.

• **Descriptions.** Complete descriptions are in Rossman (1969) and Rossman et al. (1989).

• **Illustrations.** Rossman (1969) provided a photograph of the holotype and Rossman et al. (1989) presented photographs illustrating the holotype and patterns of juveniles, subadults, and an adult; a drawing of the hemipenis was also included.

• **Distribution.** This species is known only from the type-locality in Coahuila and from two localities in Nuevo León, México (Rancho La Encantada near Zaragoza and 19.6 km NE San Antonio de Peña Nevada).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** Rossman (1969) presented a description of the type-specimen, a discussion of possible relationships, and a description of the collecting site. Rossman et al. (1989) presented a redescription of the species based on both sexes and juveniles. Further ecological notes were given along with photographs of the Peña Nevada area specimens. The only other literature is an abstract of the article by Rossman et al. (1989) in Murphy (1989).

• **Etymology.** The name *exsul* is derived from the Latin meaning "banished person," in reference to its geographic isolation from its closest relatives.

Literature Cited

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- Rossman, D.A. 1969. A new natricine snake of the Genus *Thamnophis* from northern Mexico. Occ. Pap. Mus. Zool. Louisiana State Univ. (39):1-4.
- , E.A. Liner, C.H. Treviño, and A.H. Chaney. 1989. Redescription of the garter snake *Thamnophis exsul* Rossman, 1969 (Serpentes:

Colubridae). Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington 102:507-514.

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